

ECHO 2015 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes 3-7-2013

Present: Co-Chairs Bob Staples and Doug Forsyth and members Jennifer Newell, Debra Krittenbrink, and Heather Sebero. Also present were staff Linda Price and Lisa Krieg.

Excused: Member Teresa Capps

Absent: Members Ginny Corson, April Doshier, and Jeff Hughes

The meeting was called to order by Bob Staples at 4:05 p.m.

DISCUSSION ABOUT POINT-IN-TIME COUNT OF THE HOMELESS FOR 2013

The point-in-time count took place on January 24, 2013 from midnight to midnight. That is the same day that Oklahoma City held their count. The focus this year was on the street homeless using a new model.

With the new definitions required by HUD, the homeless count was 264. Using the old definitions, the count for 2013 would be 621 compared to 615 in 2012. The new definitions do not include identified homeless kids in the public schools, couch surfers, or Department of Human Services numbers. If all of those were included, it is estimated that there would be a count of approximately 1500 homeless persons in Cleveland County. Surveys were handed out to the people in shelters with 114 returned. That information indicated that only four responding were veterans, and that those 114 had made 188 trips to the emergency room in the last year. Other count information is shown below.

Emergency Shelter: 83 – up from 39 in 2012, mostly due to the operation of the Food and Shelter warming shelter

Transitional Housing: 139 – up from 120 in 2012

Unsheltered Homeless: 42 – due to the change in the homeless definition no quantity available for comparison from 2012

Doubled Up/Couch Surfing: 37 – due to the change in the homeless definition no quantity available for comparison from 2012

Homeless on Shelter Waiting Lists: 79 – down from 187 in 2012

Homeless School Age Children: 357 – up from 269 in 2012

GENERAL DISCUSSION ABOUT HOMELESSNESS

It was noted that a number of the newer street homeless are coming from other places, are younger, often drug users and sometimes gang bangers, are less respectful, and are creating more police issues. The police have found this new group to be less respectful of public and private property, leading to more complaints called into the police.

Updates on the actions being taken by the Norman Oklahoma Affordable Housing group (NOAH) were relayed. A four hour training was provided by consultants on potential funding sources for affordable housing was presented on March 5th with attendees from a variety of non-profits, the Norman Housing Authority, lenders, and City staff. Many great ideas were provided.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

Miscellaneous discussion centered on the difficulty of dealing with the street homeless. Food & Shelter is servicing 180 – 200 people every day for meals, and the shelter was full every evening with 40-45 people sleeping in cots or on the floor. Jennifer Newell commented that the police answered many more calls to Food and Shelter in the evenings because of the concentration of street people staying there. The warming shelter was to have been closed as of the first of March, but because of inclement weather, will close approximately March 15th.

The next quarterly meeting will be at 4:00 p.m. on June 6, 2013.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.